

Are there any other treatments that might be suggested?

If these self-care exercises aren't helping as much as you would like, a bite guard (occlusal splint) can help reposition the jaw. Your dentist will be able to advise on this. Occasionally, if symptoms persist for more than 3 months, specialist dental care (orthodontics) or surgery may be suggested.

Useful Telephone Numbers

- ENT Department, Lister Hospital
☎ 01438 314333, Ext. 5113 / 4118
- Day Surgery Unit, Lister Hospital
☎ 01438 285775 or 01438 285776
- ENT Nurse Specialist (Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm)
☎ 01438 314333, bleep 1028
Mobile: 0778 534 3359 or 0787 639 0290
- ENT Admission Office (waiting list)
☎ 01438 286836 or 01438 286835

In an emergency, dial 999 and request an ambulance or attend your nearest Emergency Department.

NHS 111 can help if you have an urgent medical problem and you're not sure what to do. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

☎ 111

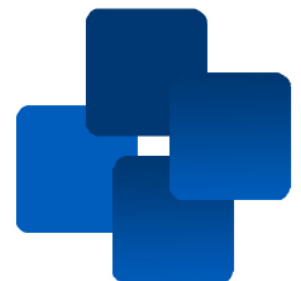
Useful ENT website: www.entuk.org

Patient Information

TMJD

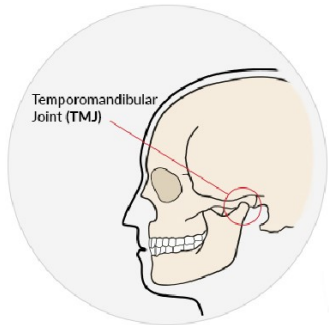
Temporomandibular Joint Dysfunction

Ears, Nose and Throat Department



What is temporomandibular joint dysfunction (TMJD)?

The temporomandibular joint (TMJ) is commonly known as the 'jaw joint' and is the joint that connects the jaw bone with the skull. It is found in front of your ear. These two bones are connected by muscles and ligaments. There is a capsule that surrounds the joint and a disc between the bones which moves when you open and close your mouth.



TMJ dysfunction is a common disorder that affects the joint. It is thought that it affects up to 15% of people. As you can imagine, this joint gets a lot of use from talking and chewing and this can cause irritation which means the joint stops working well.

It is usually a benign muscular condition and it is not directly harmful to your health but it can certainly interfere with your quality of life. People may have symptoms on one or both sides. The pain from the TMJ can be confusing and it may seem like the pain is coming from your ear or feel more like a general headache.

What are the symptoms of TMJD?

The common symptoms are:

- Pain around your jaw, ear or in the temple area
- Clicking or popping when you move your jaw
- Jaw locking when you open your mouth
- Restricted mouth opening
- Headaches

What causes TMJD?

Why people get TMJD is generally not known but it is thought that it is caused by a combination of factors which either predispose people to the condition (e.g. genetics/hormones) or factors which make it worse (trauma, misalignment of the jaw, stress, teeth grinding). Most recent research suggests most of the discomfort comes from overusing your muscles and joints.

What is bruxism?

Bruxism is the medical word for teeth grinding. This is a common cause of TMJD and often might be the cause of your symptoms particularly if the pain is worse when you wake up.

How can I manage TMJD?

TMJD is often a condition that comes and goes by itself but some people experience longstanding pain. People may also have times when the pain flares up and gets worse for a few days. There is no known cure but there are lots of ways you can help your symptoms.

Some useful tips to manage your pain include:

- Resting your jaw by talking less and eating softer foods
- Avoid straining your neck and make sure you keep a good posture
- Reduce stressful situations, some people find relaxation exercises useful
- Consider asking occupational health to assess your workstation
- Avoid clenching your teeth
- Avoid wide mouth opening, e.g. yawning
- Apply a warm or cold compress (whichever feels better) to the affected area for 5 minutes
- Massage the affected area
- Sometimes painkillers can be useful (paracetamol and ibuprofen if tolerated)
- Undertake rehabilitation exercises

TMJD rehabilitation exercises

Rehabilitation exercises can be really helpful in managing your symptoms. Try and do these exercises twice a day for a week. After this first week, do the exercises as often as you can. You might find that when you start doing these exercises there is some pain but this will ease as your muscles get stronger. You will normally see a good improvement in your symptoms in 2-3 weeks once you start doing these exercises every day.



- 1. Masseter massage** - Sit upright and place three fingers against your cheek on the muscle at the angle of your jaw. Make circling motion and repeat this for one minute.



- 2. Temporalis massage** - Place three fingers above your cheekbone in the temple area. Pull downwards until you feel the bone and repeat this for one minute.



- 3. Mouth opening** - Standing in front of a mirror open and close your mouth keeping your teeth in line. Repeat this for 30 seconds.



- 4. Sideways jaw movement** - Open your jaw by 1 cm and move your jaw from side to side for 30 seconds



- 5. Mouth opening in alignment** - Place your tongue on the roof of your mouth and keep it there gently. Open and close your mouth, repeat this for 30 seconds.